People in America, who have no idea of how Africa is, think that, 'Eh! So this Africa is [a] jungle.' You know, that kind of thing. And these people are not helping by depicting Africa [as] starving with disease, you know? Disease, starving, we are so poor . . . and they have the solution!" Constance was on a roll. As the head of the Ghana Association of Food Producers (GAFP), one of the Ghana's largest networks of smallholder farmers, Constance could not risk mincing her words; there was too much on the line.

Sitting at GAFP's headquarters in Accra, Constance and I had been discussing genetically modified (GM) crops, several of which were being tested across Ghana's public research institutions. Supported by global donors and industry, proponents had high hopes that GM crops, once commercialized, would help Ghanaian farmers produce more. Constance, and the farmers she represented, weren't so sure. "*No*, what do we know? We don't have any solutions for our problems," she continued, sarcastically. "Why do they think that we cannot find solutions? *If* they left us alone, maybe we would have found solutions to our answers. *If* they wanted to work with us on equal fields, we would have found solutions. But to exploit us, make money out of us, after all the money you took away!"

For years, Constance, GAFP, and allied groups had mounted a strong opposition to GM crops, a technology they had not asked for, nor one they thought was appropriate for the challenges Ghanaian farmers faced. They were suspect, too, of the narrative proponents used to frame the technology: as a humanitarian gift for a burdened continent. Such narratives circulated both locally and globally. "The peculiarities of Africa, and therefore Ghana," Dr. Ahmed Alhassan Yakubu, a former deputy minister of food and agriculture, told reporters, "should let us have a re-think about the negative dirt that we throw at biotechnology as a science. It is extremely important we do so" (Gakpo 2017c).

To pronounce something as peculiar is to denote exception and, at times, urgency. Agriculture in Africa ("and therefore Ghana," as Yakubu suggested) is certainly considered as such, described by observers as under- and even non-productive, and lagging behind the rest of the world. To counter this, international development agencies, private foundations, and major corporations have tasked themselves with sparking a "new" Green Revolution for Africa. The project is underscored by major investment to transform African foodways, markets, and farms so that African farmers purchase high-yielding seeds and chemical inputs, and in turn, ideally increase yields and "feed the future." Of the various interventions being prescribed, perhaps none are as controversial as GM crops, a technology that is fiercely opposed in some circles and widely endorsed in others. These crops, advocates argue, are necessary to tackle challenges on a so-called peculiar continent. "The Europeans have decided they don't want to use it . . . which is fine, they're not facing malnutrition and starvation," said Bill Gates, whose foundation has placed significant backing into the research and design of GM crops for Africa. "[But] the Africans, I think, will choose to let their people have enough to eat" (Wall Street Journal 2016).

Over a decade ago, a global consortium of donors and industry came together to develop GM crops for African farmers. Early on, consortium officials identified Ghana as a potential partner. With a strong public research institution and a population heavily employed in smallholder agriculture, Ghana seemed to be the perfect location to conduct field trials of GM rice and cowpea.[1] But unlike conventionally bred seeds, GM crops are governed globally and cannot simply be imported into a country or placed on the market without special oversight. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety decrees that signatories, of which Ghana is one, must establish regulations regarding genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and regulatory bodies to enforce said regulations.[2] And so, in order to participate in the donor-driven GM crop projects, Ghana had to set up complex infrastructure to support the technology, including the development of new laws, regulatory policies, and a regulatory agency. In other words, before GM seeds were commercialized, before farmers could access them, the state had to transform.

This book focuses on this transformation, the controversy it garnered, and those who sought to shape it. In the chapters that follow, I focus on the actors—Ghanaian and otherwise—who were a part of early planning and continue to drive the push for GM commercialization. I posit these narratives against discourse and activism of the Food Sovereignty Platform, a nation-wide social movement that Constance and GAFP belong to that seeks to halt GM commercialization. Lastly, I consider smallholder farmers, whose lives and livelihoods are debated daily in boardrooms across Accra, Seattle, and Washington, DC.

In Ghana, as Constance alluded to, GMOs have become a vehicle to explore larger contentions—of sovereignty, of "development," of food and agriculture, of a nascent country. Thus, in the chapters that follow, GM crops are not the singular object of inquiry; there are no agronomic surveys or detailed tables of farmer yields in this book. Rather, this book explores how at the core of contests over GMOs in Ghana is something much deeper. GMOs have become an avenue to air grievances centuries in the making; the systematic de-valuing and exploitation of African land, labor, and knowledge. As such, the book is an ethnography of how global powers, local resistance, and capital flows are shaping contemporary African foodways.

The manuscript contributes to a small but growing literature on the daily contours of "new" Green Revolution efforts on the African continent (Boafo and Lyons 2021; Moseley et al. 2016; Schnurr 2019; Shilomboleni 2018). Central to my inquiry are global financial flows, tensions of the nation-state as they relate to governance and sovereignty, and the agency of African actors—government officials, farmers, activists, and development practitioners—who work on and against global forces to shape development outcomes. Urgency, which so often underscores discourses on food and agriculture in development spaces, is not central to my discussion. By approaching GMOs neither as an urgently needed nor as an exceptional intervention, I discovered a particular tension across actors in Ghana, that of recipient fatigue, a collective feeling of distress and disappointment after decades of donor-driven development plans. It is because of this collective failure of development that Ghanaian scientists and bureaucrats take an explicitly *political* stance on supposedly "anti-political" science, and that farmers and activists,